1: Ingrams G-5 (1934-35)1936 MM2 Hadhramaut MM2

Religion.

Islam is, of course, practically exclusively the religion of the Hadhramaut. There are a number of Banians in Mukalla and a few in Shihr, but, apart from these, other faiths are represented only by one or two Christians and possibly Parsees in the same ports. Occasional Memons, Khojas, and Ithnasheris among the Indian population represent the only exceptions to the universal adherence in the Hadhramaut to the Shafite Sunni school. Rumour has it that traces left from the old Ibadhi-ism are still to be found in the north west in Nejran, and there are of course Ibadhis from Oman, eastwards in Dhufar.

CHAPTER VI.

CONDITIONS OF LIVING IN THE HADHRAMAUT.

The report deals with the conditions found in the Hadhramaut and, to some extent at least, peculiar to that country; it assumes a general knowledge of Arabian conditions of life which are common to the whole Peninsula. It may, however, be well in a few remarks to call attention to some general features of tribal life which should be borne in mind.

The culture of the Arab is determined by his environment, which also largely affects his religion. In the more fertile wadis the people are settled and conservative, on the barren steppes and desert places they are nomadic and communistic. The Beduin, and indeed many of the settled tribes, are extremely poor; their food is of the simplest, their staples being dates, home-grown millet and other grain, imported rice, and dried fish. The tribesman's wardrobe consists of two or three pieces of cloth, and indigo, in which he has implicit faith as protection alike from sun and cold. His dwelling is poor and its furniture hardly makes a camel's load. There are three things he saves up to acquire—arms (a rifle and *jambiya* or curved dagger), a camel, and a wife. The wife is my own addition; Beduins have often mentioned the other requirements to me, which shows, I suppose, that the wife is either an essential who goes without saying or that she is an afterthought. But these are the only things for which a Beduin saves. In other respects he is thriftless.

Poverty affects them in one of two ways: either they raid to augment their scanty means of living or they emigrate and earn their increment in more favourable surroundings abroad. Raiding is a paradox: it is not only a crime against society, but also a recognized means of livelihood. Furthermore, as it is played according to recognized rules it is a national sport. As more and more of the population become settled, raiding tends to become less popular. It is of course a large overstatement to suggest that football and other games will take its place as a sport, but the overstatement does contain some truth, for football is rapidly becoming

105 more popular and provides the something of excitement which has given a zest to raiding. It should not be forgotten that some of our own games were war games.

The Beduin proletariat and the capitalist townsmen are mutually necessary to each other. The Beduins do all the carrying trade and supply the firewood and their other scanty products to the towns, and the merchants sell to the Beduins what they require of food, clothing, and other necessaries of life. The brokers of the Beduins to be found in all the towns supply the link between the two. They live on helping the Beduins to sell their produce to, and buy their requirements from, the merchants, and on helping the merchants to obtain the transport they need.

Housing.

342 Each town in the Hadhramaut has its own individual characteristics as regards housing. Although the houses of coastal towns are all of the familiar Arab type built of stone rubble and whitewashed, there is a wide difference in the aspect of the towns themselves. Mukalla, for example, is a miniature edition of Zanzibar—tall houses and narrow streets, sometimes not six feet across, while Shihr is a town of lower houses, wide streets, and open spaces. Away from the coast, mud is the almost universal building medium, and sun-dried mud bricks are used alike in building the palaces of the rich and the simple *dars* of the poor.

342 In the Wadi Du'an the tall mud-built houses climb up the banks of the wadi. They are close packed, but it is in their interiors that they merit attention. The colour scheme is black and white and rusty red. Although there is practically no whitewash on the outside of Du'an houses, the interiors of the better-class dwellings are spotlessly white. The ceilings of the rooms, which are lofty, are supported by carved pillars of '*elb*' wood, and all interior woodwork is of this material. The doors are set in wide heavily-carved frames and the whole ornamented extensively with iron nails, two inches across the heads, burnished with lead till they shine like polished dollars. It is a modern development in Du'an houses that every room in the house should be provided with its own ablution room, and as a consequence they are really self-contained flats. The entrance door gives on to a passage into the flat, and there is usually not a door into the main living-room but a Moorish arch either in the whitewashed wall or of stained '*elb* wood again studded with burnished nails. The ceiling is held up on rafters of '*elb* wood supported by the pillars previously referred to, the mud floor of the next storey above being laid over slats of date wood very attractively arranged in herring bone pattern.

342 In Tarim the principal feature is the large number of enormous dwelling-houses in a style copied from Malaya but built of mud bricks.

[1] Other Arabic names are *sidr* and *nebk*. *Zizyphus Spina-Christi*. L.